

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-11 FEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-11 FMC-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02

DLOS-06 SPC-03 SAM-01 AID-20 NSC-10 CIEP-02 TRSE-00

SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 DRC-01 /141 W

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R 061234Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5228

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL UE VALLETTA 0247

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, ETRN, MT

SUBJ: MALTA SHIPBUILDING PROJECT

1. FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS OF A PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SHIPS SAID TO BE UNDER CONSIDERATION BY GOM. ON FEB 5, JOE ATTARD KINGSWELL, MALTA'S "ROVING AMBASSADOR" WHO SPENDS BULK OF HIS TIME ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, PROVIDED SOME BACKGROUND.

2. KINGSWELL ASSERTED THAT PROJECT IS INDEED ACTIVE. INTENTION IS TO EATABLSIH YARD AT KALAFRANA ON MARSAXLOKK BAY AT SOUTHERN END OF ISLAND. AIM WOULD BE PRINCIPALLY CONSTRUCTION OF OIL TANKERS UP TO 300,000 TONS. KINGSWELL SAID PROJECT ALREADY EXISTS ON PAPER, AND MUCH OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CAME FROM FRENCH EXPERTS, WHO HAVE ALSO WORKED WITH EXISTING MALTA DRYDOCKS. KINGSWELL SAID GOM INTEREST WOULD

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BE THROUGH EQUITY HELD BY MALTA DRYDOCKS, AT LEAST

51 PERCENT. HE CLAIMED THAT PRESENT INTENTION IS TO START SHIP CONSTRUCTION WITHIN 18 MONTHS.

3. KINGSWELL SAID GOM IS NOW SEEKING FINANCIAL INPUT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AND IMPLIED THAT MINTIFF'S CURRENT MIDDLE EASTERN TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT IS RELATED TO THIS EFFORT. HE ALSO SAID THAT LIBYAN HAS SOME INTEREST.

4. WORK FORCE FOR BUILDING ENTERPRISE WOULD COME LARGELY FROM REDUNDANT PERSONNEL CURRENTLY ON PAYROLL OF MALTA DRYDOCKS, WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY TAKE HEAVY WAGE BURDEN FROM THAT CORPORATION.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THIS PROJECT SEEMS AMBITIOUS FOR MALTA, KINGSWELL IS A SERIOUS PERSON, AND WE THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT PROJECT IS INDEED ACTIVE AT THIS TIME.GETZ

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